

EXHIBIT # 11
DATE 1/29/13
HB 246

Elyse End
4785 Swamp Rd
Belgrade, MT 59714
January 28, 2013

Chairman Liz Bangerter
Local Government Committee
Montana House of Representatives
PO Box 200400
Helena, Montana 59620

Dear Chairman Bangerter,

Regrettably I am unable to attend the public hearing on Tuesday, but am writing to express my concern about the changes to the Montana Code that Kerry White proposes in HB 246. The proposed changes impose unnecessary government regulation and review on a process that currently works well to protect everyone's interests. Further, the proposed changes would be a direct infringement upon the rights of land owners to manage and plan for the use of their land. Also by creating an additional layer of governmental regulation on an already stringent process, the changes could discourage future families and individuals from establishing conservation easements that would benefit the interests of the area.

My husband and I purchased a parcel of land in the valley outside of Belgrade. We were drawn to the area because of its beautiful open spaces, its incredible bird, wildlife and fishing resources, and its placement among neighboring ranching and farming property. The land we purchased was divided into 5 buildable parcels and future development to that extent would have really changed the area. Recognizing the value of the land for fish, birds and wildlife habitat and for maintaining the open space and character of the valley, we were interested in preserving it through a conservation easement that would permit us to build one home and to preserve our vision for that area of the valley forever. The process was a thorough several year effort working with Gallatin Valley Land Trust, a group specifically knowledgeable and dedicated to preserving land for open spaces, recreation and conservation. Now, with the easement in place, we have been able to focus our attention upon developing and improving the resources on our property.

Our interest in setting up a conservation easement would have been greatly diminished by the thought of giving up our rights as private landowners to additional governmental regulation and involvement. We believe that the proposed changes would not offer any improvement to a process that is already very thorough, but would take away rights from private landowners and be a deterrent to individuals who would consider putting their land into a conservation trusts.

Thanks so much for your consideration.

Sincerely,


Elyse End